THE Reconstructionist

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REALITIES AND VALUES

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MORRIS ADLER is a chaplain in the Army of the United States.

WILLIAM M. KRAMER is assistant rabbi at The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio.

DR. NOAH NARDI is on the supervisory staff of the Jewish Education Committee of New York.

THEODORE N. LEWIS is rabbi of the Progressive Synagogue, Brooklyn, N. Y., and a contributing editor to THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, and book editor of the Indianapolis *Jewish Post*.

NORMAN SCHAININ is at present in the Army of the United States.

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THE

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Volume XI. June 15, 1945 Tammuz 4, 5705 No. 9

EDITORIALS

DEFAMING JEWS TO APPEASE ANTI-SEMITES

THE American Council for Judaism is opposed to Zionism; that is its privilege. It does all in its power to defeat the Palestine program adopted by majority vote of the democratically elected representatives of American Jewry. Even that may be somewhat condoned by the absence of any permanent, comprehensive and authoritative organization of the Jews of America. But when the American Council for Judaism defames its ideological opponents in the general press, when, moreover, according to information from an apparently reliable source, its influence results in the suppression of opposing views in a community-owned Jewish newspaper, it oversteps all bounds of decency.

What happened is this. At a public meeting in Seattle, called by a committee of local business men, Rabbi Elmer Berger, Executive Director of the American Council for Judaism, made one of his usual anti-Zionist addresses. He had previously invited a reporter from the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* to attend the meeting. The item which appeared in that paper quotes Rabbi Berger as saying: "In America, for instance, we feel a Jew should be an American first and a Jew afterward, just as another is an American first and a Protestant afterward." The report then continues, "He pointed out this is *diametrically opposed* (italics ours) to the Zionist movement, which seeks to set up a separate Jewish nation in Palestine."

Not content with giving publicity in the general press to this slur on Zionists, the committee which arranged the meeting did all it could to deny Zionists the opportunity to set forth their side of the controversy. When the Seattle Zionist Council asked for permission to have two representatives of the Zionist group participate in the discussion following Rabbi Berger's address, they were told that only questions were permitted but not discussion. When the Zionists, not wishing to air the controversy before a Gentile public, submitted a statement of their point of view to *The Transcript,* the Pacific Northwest's community - owned Jewish newspaper, the statement, we are told, was rejected as "controversial." Even as a paid advertisement *The Transcript* refused to publish it. What sort of an Americanism is it that tries thus to circumvent the freedom of the press?

The very terms of Rabbi Berger's statement are significant of the kind of Americanism for which he stands. One cannot imagine a pious Christian, be he

Protestant or Catholic, saying: "I am an American first and a Christian afterwards." If Judaism, as Rabbi Berger contends, is a religion and nothing but a religion, how can he say that he is an American first and a Jew afterwards. All true religionists acknowledge their first allegiance to God and to universal ideals of freedom and justice which express His character. As religious Zionists, we see no conflict between our Americanism and our Zionism, for, should any apparent conflict arise, it would be immediately resolved by reference to universal religious and ethical ideals. This we regard as the dictate both of our Americanism and of our Judaism. But the Americanism of the Council is an "America First" Americanism, an isolationist Americanism, one is tempted to say, a fascist Americanism. For the essence of fascism is that the nationalism of the state *is* one's religion and that one's country's interests are the sole criterion of religious and ethical values.

As shoddy as is the quality of the Council's Americanism, just so shoddy is the quality of its Judaism. This is not always obvious to the undiscerning. When the Council wants to appeal not to mass hysteria but to liberal opinion, it adopts the tone of liberalism in a way which may mislead the unwary. Thus, an article by Sidney Wallach in its *Information Bulletin* of June 1st, quotes with approval from an editorial in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST the statement that "until modern Jews discover their role in the modern world, they will continue to be maladjusted and they will not be in a position to make a significant contribution to the better world in the making." He then asserts that the alternatives between which we must choose are whether we want to be "a national group or a religious group," and he opts the latter.

There is here clearly the fallacy of the false dilemma. The author arbitrarily assumes an *either or* which precludes the possibility of a *both and*. But every impartial student of Jewish history and observer of Jewish life knows that the Jews have always been *both* a people *and* a religious community; that the Jewish collectivity is referred to now as the *am Yisrael,* the people of Israel, and again as the *keneset Yisrael,* the religious community of Israel, and that the two terms have never been conceived as contradictory or mutually exclusive.

In fact, if we abstract Jewish religion from its involvement in the whole complex of Jewish civilization, that religion ceases to be Jewish. For then we would have to discard not only all references to Palestine, but every trace of the Hebrew language in Jewish liturgy, the Jewish calendar with its festivals and commemorative occasions, all distinctive Jewish ritual and every reference to a Jewish covenant or mission, since none of these things is essential to that "ethical monotheism" which, according to Mr. Wallach, is the whole content of Judaism. But if we strip Jewish religion of all these and leave only its universal significance, what is there Jewish about it? Are not Moslems also monotheists? Are not Unitarians? Are not — according to their own understanding—even trinitarian Christians? What need then of an American Council for Judaism? Why not, instead, an American Council for Ethical Monotheism which could include Christians and Moslems in its membership?

That is, of course, pushing the argument to its logical limits, and Mr. Wallach might well contend in reply that all religious communions avail themselves of cultural forms which help their adherents to realize the universal values for which they stand. That is true, but its truth is a justification of Zionism and all those nationalistic elements in Juda-

ism which Mr. Wallach, Rabbi Berger and their followers denounce. For to the religious Jew who has no axe to grind, who does not subordinate everything Jewish to the exigencies of an escapist public relations policy, all these nationalistic elements enter into his God-consciousness; they all help him to fulfil his duties to God and his fellowmen. Freedom is no less a religious ideal when it means freedom for the Jews than when it means freedom for the Poles, the Czechs or the Americans. If the Council contends that Americanism and Zionism conflict, let it show precisely at what point, and let it discuss concretely how the conflict must be resolved in the light of ethical monoetheism. When it does that instead of seeking the favor of anti-Semites by denouncing fellow-Jews, it will deserve a patient and considered hearing.

THE PROBLEM OF MANNING THE JEWISH PROFESSIONS

SUMMER is coming, the end of the academic year. This year few executives will go on their vacations in the serene confidence that their institutions will be well staffed. Everywhere, there will be a hunt for personnel. The search, indeed, has already started and staff workers are not to be had. There is a serious shortage of all Jewish public functionaries. Even the rabbinate, the best patronized Jewish profession, is running low in candidates. In Jewish education, the shortage is almost catastrophic, many teaching and more administrative posts go begging for want of candidates. The same stringency is felt in social work in its various departments, in fields of executive work in national and local organizations, in organized Zionist activities, in community welfare organizations, in Jewish arts, journalism, radio, public relations, and other Jewish services.

Our failure to replenish ourselves spiritually presents a most serious threat to our future. Not only are we threatened with the paralysis of the functions which the professionals normally perform, but American Jewry is unfortunately dependent on its professional personnel for many of its activities of leadership which are usually carried on by laymen. Such offices, for example, as the chairmanship of the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal, the Zionist Organization of America, and the American Jewish Congress are filled by rabbis. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we attract persons of the highest caliber to our professional services.

As a people we do not lack ability but our best talents seem to be drained off by professions other than those which serve us collectively. Medicine, dentistry, and law claim the students with the highest academic standing. All posts are, of course, eventually filled in every department of Jewish life. Wherever there is a vacancy there is usually a candidate, but, unfortunately, in too many cases the vacancy is filled by the wrong person. Partially trained or totally untrained personnel occupy too many important positions in Jewish life and, if the present trend goes unchecked, the quality of our leadership will further deteriorate.

There is an old saying that nothing succeeds like success. If we succeed in attracting better men to our communal work, that very fact will serve as a stimulus to other persons of high caliber. If, on the other hand, our communal endeavors draw only men of poorer quality, that, in turn, will determine the run of persons who will be further drawn to the work.

Recently, a committee was formed under the auspices of the Jewish Theolo-

gical Seminary, with Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan as chairman, to attempt to draw qualified young people into Jewish work. The committee met and received reports about attempts to interest young people. Invariably, when the young people were asked to take up Jewish communal work their answer was, "What security is there in Jewish public professions? How can we be certain that, after we have studied and prepared ourselves, there will be work for us?" That query every individual has a right to ask. What security is there for him in the field? Who will care for the rabbi when he loses his pulpit? Who will provide for the teacher should his job be discontinued? Who will look after the unemployed editors, artists and social workers? The burden is thrown on the individual at a time when many other occupations are already covered by social security programs. Obviously the risk involved for the individual is too great, and we cannot blame him if he does not take it.

Here is where our failure to form a central democratic communal organization comes home to roost. Had we had a well-functioning community organization, we could have both stimulated and regulated the flow of personnel and given some assurance of security to graduates of various institutions. A truly functioning community organization is actually a *sine qua non* of Jewish survival. Picture, for example, how an organized community might set standards for personnel in executive positions, what it might do about licensing teachers, how it might raise the standards of Anglo-Jewish journalism, or what it might do to encourage the arts. Without it we are left at the mercies of a competitive market which is not always kind to fine, sensitive persons who are the most precious assets in our communal work.

Unfortunately, the development of community organization depends in large measure on the quality of our professional personnel, and in turn, the quality of our professional personnel will depend upon the type of community organization we have. We shall soon be caught in a dilemma unless we promptly constitute our community organizations, while we still have time. We must hasten to organize ourselves for spiritual renewal before it is too late. In the meantime, we must continue to urge our young people to enter the Jewish professional fields from idealistic motives and to run the risk in the hope that the Jewish community will not forget them and that their own proficiency will be a safeguard against their being neglected.

Many of these young people with the best of intentions to prepare themselves for Jewish communal service may find no institution in which to train. There is provision made for rabbinical training and for the training of Hebrew teachers, but where can one train for Jewish social work or for journalism, or for executive work, or for the Jewish arts? It is hoped that the Jewish Theological Seminary's projected program of expansion to a University of Judaism in which all these branches of learning will be represented will not be long delayed, and that candidates for all of our Jewish professional services will be able to obtain preparation there.

UNIFYING JEWISH EDUCATION

A VERY significant presentation was made at the recent meeting in New York of the National Council for Jewish Education. Dr. Alexander M. Dushkin, director of the Jewish Education Committee of New York, read a paper in which he reported on the extended discussions carried on by the staff of his organization, for the purpose of determining, if possible, the

elements of Jewish teaching common to all the groups represented there. In the Jewish Education Committee are to be found practically every group within Jewish life from the extreme Orthodox to the Yiddishists of the Shalom Aleichem Shule and the Arbeiter Ring. A knowledge of what is common to all groups would facilitate their cooperation and insure the transmission of the Jewish heritage to the largest possible number of our children in this country.

The remarkable fact which he was able to report was that the various groups within the Committee had finally agreed upon seven fundamental values common to them all, values which, they declared, were indispensable to the Jewish child and youth growing up in the American environment. These seven values are: 1. the classical continuing Jewish traditions, religious, literary, institutional ethical — torah in its widest sense; 2. concrete forms of personal Jewish living; 3. Hebrew in Jewish literature and life; 4. the Jewish people—identification with it, knowledge of its past and present, and desire for its survival and welfare the world over; 5. Palestine—its unique role in Jewish history and tradition and its continued upbuilding and development; 6. American Jewry—its history and development, the organization of its cultural and communal institutions, participation in and responsibility for its welfare and growth; 7. faith in the divine purpose making for the betterment of the world and man, involving the human obligation to strive toward a better, democratic world order.

Naturally, in presenting this list of seven basic values, Dr. Dushkin made it clear that each group would interpret each value in its own way. Differences in the selection of materials and interpretation of ideas would inevitably follow from the existing differences in ideology. Nevertheless, all agreed, he said, that the omission of any one of these values would tend to distort the rest. They are organically related to one another and, by the acceptance of all these values, the groups become organically related within one integral Jewish people.

What was particularly interesting about the discussions of the Jewish Education Committee staff was the demonstration of the fact that, when Jewish life is studied objectively by a group of experts, they inevitably arrive at the conception of Judaism as a civilization. It has been frequently said that the test of any social system lies in its amenability to translation into educational terms. Here were educators seeking to discover what the contemporary Jewish child and youth ought to be taught in the Jewish school. Inescapably, they arrived at the "plenary" program of Reconstructionism. They discovered that it is a complete civiliization which unites all Jews; that this civilization is a religious civilization; and, because they must allow for differing interpretations of each value, that this religious civilization is a dynamic, a living and growing civilization. Thus, the Reconstructionist philosophy, in its broadest sense, can become the common philosophy of Jewish life, and constitute the basis of Jewish unity.

The members of the educational staff who formulated the seven values have done more than merely list areas of agreement among themselves. They have really come to terms on their general philosophy of Jewish life. Moreover, they have enunciated the principle that each group in Jewish life is duty-bound to recognize the others as legitimate expressions of a common civilization, so long as they accept all the values of that civilization, whatever hierarchy or organization they create for those values.

All Jewish educators having this ap-

proach, are bound, in the end to rally to their support all those Jews who are looking for a consistent and intelligible philosophy of Jewish life. In some, this must lead to a well thought out pattern in which each of the values falls into its proper place. The seal of the Reconstructionist movement indicates the pattern which renders all the values organically interrelated, with Palestine at the hub, the American Jewish community at the rim, and ethics, culture and religion as the spokes of the wheel.

The staff of the Jewish Education Committee deserves our thanks for having shown the broad underlying postulates which constitute the basic elements of unity in American Israel.

REALITIES AND VALUES

With the San Francisco Conference drawing to a close the political focus of Zionism is shifting from the United States to England. July will witness a meeting of the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization which is a sort of miniature Zionist Congress and which will prepare for the calling of the first World Zionist Congress since 1939. In the meantime, the Jewish Agency is pressing for an immediate decision as to the status of Palestine. It has submitted to Prime Minister Churchill a memorandum containing the following points: (1) that Palestine be proclaimed a Jewish state; (2) that the Jewish Agency be authorized to bring to Palestine as many new settlers as possible and to develop all the resources of the country; (3) that the transfer of Jews from Europe be assisted by an international loan; (4) that Germany pay reparations in kind to the Jewish people for the development of Palestine and that German property in Palestine be requisitioned as the first instalment; and (5) that all international facilities be provided for the exit and transfer from Europe of all Jews wishing to settle in Palestine. With a general election in the offing and with the British Labor Party supporting the Zionist contention, it will not be easy for the government to ignore these demands. *The Manchester Guardian,* one of the most influential liberal newspapers of Great Britain, has come out strongly in favor of the Jewish Commonwealth. So also has Harold Laski, famous economist and influential member of the Labor Party.

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Now that the fighting is over in Europe and our soldiers there can enjoy a certain amount of leisure, the Jewish Welfare Board is organizing Jewish hospitality committees in Europe and establishing lecture courses and study groups in Jewish history, current Jewish problems and other subjects of Jewish and of general interest. If these courses are designed to orient the Jewish soldier to the responsibilities and opportunities of Jewish communal life, they can make an important contribution to the happy adjustment of our servicemen to Jewish life after their demobilization, when the time for that comes.

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"Memo from the Dead," is the title of a pamphlet containing excerpts from the forthcoming "Jewish Black Book," to be published by the World Jewish Congress, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee of the USSR, the *Vaad Leumi* of Palestine and the American Jewish Committee of Writers, Artists and Scientists. It concludes with a quotation from Vassili Grossman's "Report on Treblinka," which reads, in part, as follows: "Today everyone is responsible before his conscience, before his son and his mother, before his country and before mankind; responsible with all the power of his heart

nd his mind to find the answer to the uestion: What bred racism? How can we prevent the rebirth of Nazism, of ascism everywhere, either on this or the ther side of the ocean—ever, ever?" We ish that this could be made required aily readig for all who participate in he UNCIO or in any diplomatic or gov- rnmental functions. If it were, there ould perhaps be less bickering and spar- ing for diplomatic advantage and more onstructive cooperation for world peace.

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At the entrance to the oncentration camp at Buchenwald, there ere inscribed the words: "There is no od." Doubtless they were designed to onvey the same thought as the inscrip- ion over the portals of Dante's Inferno, Leave hope behind, all ye who enter ere." The denial to all the imprisoned f the ministrations of religion bore fur- her testimony to the realization by the azi fiends of the role of religon in aintaining human morale. One is re- inded of the Psalmist's exclamation, The scoundrel says in his heart, 'There s no God." The Psalmist did not have n mind people whose metaphysical theo- ies had led them to affirm atheism. He ad in mind the godlessness of those who efy the moral order and rebel against od's rule. And that godlessness could ot shake his own faith. We suggest that he inscription over the entrance to the uchenwald Camp be replaced by these ords from the last verse of that very salm: "When the Lord restores the aptives of His people, let Jacob be glad, srael rejoice."

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The concept of Palestine s the "spiritual center" of Jewry is not new one. Up to the present time, how- ver, it has been a spiritual center main- y in the sense that the cultural and piritual interests of world Jewry con- verged upon it, that it attracted to itself all those spiritual forces which, without it, may have perished. Its university, for example, proved a haven for Jewish scholars in all fields whose careers were frustrated by academic and governmental anti-Semitism. Indirectly Eretz Yisrael has also stimulated spiritual and cultural activity in the diaspora by strengthening Jewish morale and calling attention to the creative possibilities of Jewish life. But, in view of the destruction of the great East European cultural reservoir of Judaism, Palestine Jewry is becoming increasingly aware of its responsibility to redeem the diaspora from its neglect of Jewish values. The Hebrew University announces plans "to train young men and women coming from abroad (chiefly, it is anticipated, from America and the British Empire) who wish to prepare themselves as teachers, social workers and other types of communal workers for service in their own communities."

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The United Jewish Appeal has been reconstituted. The United Palestine Appeal is to receive 57 per cent and the Joint Distribution Committee 43 per cent of the funds. The agreement was arrived at as a result of pressure from the President's War Relief Control Board. The Board was apparently urged to take this action by the National Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, after the Council's own efforts at mediating an agreement had failed. Although we deplored the dissolution of the longstanding partnership of the U.P.A. and the J.D.C. the manner of its reestablishment is far from gratifying. It is a sad situation when Jewry can find no way of achieving a needed unity except by an appeal to governmental agencies. This surrender of Jewish autonomy is a dangerous precedent. But this sort

(*Continued on Page* 24)

A Study in Jewish Observance

By JACOB S. GOLUB and NOAH NARDI

THE fact that Jewish ritual observance has slackened considerably in the American environment is well known. Nevertheless, when confronted with the cold facts, we are somewhat taken aback. The situation is much more serious than we imagine. This paper represents a little inquiry into the observance of a group of parents in one of the large Conservative synagogue centers in New York City. The findings are sufficiently disturbing to make us apprehensive. What does the future, we wonder, hold out for Jewish life? Will there be complete disintegration?

Constituency of the Group

The subjects of this study are 160 parents of three schools represented in the center. One is a Jewish Day School, sometimes miscalled a parochial school, one is a Hebrew school meeting three times a week, and the third is a Sunday school. The number of parents represented is not very large. There are only 53 parents of the day school, representing about 45 per cent of the school's enrollment, 41 parents of the Hebrew school, representing 25 to 30 per cent of the school enrollment, and 66 parents of the Sunday school, representing about 30 per cent of the homes. The study should, therefore, not be taken to be of more than a very limited application. But while the findings for the particular group might be considered inconclusive, nevertheless, since the basic facts are repeated in each of the three groups separately, we may infer that we are dealing here with definite trends for which the population studied is an adequate sample of the whole.

The groups of parents are first generation American-born or immigrants who came here in childhood. The median age of the fathers is between 40 and 45, while the mothers are on an average four years younger. Fifty-six per cent of the fathers and 70 per cent of the mothers were born in the United States. With the exception of an additional 2 per cent, born in Western Europe, the remainder came from Eastern Europe. Proof that those who came here as immigrants arrived in childhood is furnished by the fact that over 95 per cent of all the parents graduated from public school. In general the group is a highly educated one, almost 60 per cent having attended college and almost 80 per cent having completed high school. The groups are almost equal in their secular educational advantages, as can be seen from table I.*

In their Hebrew education, however, the groups are not as similar. Only 41 per cent of the day school fathers and 50 per cent of the Sunday school fathers received Jewish schooling, whereas 75 per cent of the Hebrew school fathers were given a Jewish education, 15 per cent of them in yeshivahs. The Hebrew school group is found to be most observant throughout, though the wives of the Hebrew school group received least Jewish education of all. Only 17 per cent of the wives of the Hebrew school parents received any Jewish education, whereas 22.7 per cent of the day school and 28.8 per cent of the Sunday school respectively received such education.

Evidence of the recent European origins of even the native group is the fact that the vast majority still understand Yiddish. (See Table II.) Only 9 per cent

*All tables appear at the end of this article.

never use Yiddish and, even in their case, there is no indication that they do not know it. But even assuming that they do not, 91 per cent do know and sometimes use the language. The number reading Yiddish newspapers, however, is small. Only 30.8 per cent sometimes read Yiddish paper and only 8.5 per cent read it regularly.

Let us now look at the extent to which this group observes Jewish practices. We shall find that some practices are almost completely neglected, whereas others receive a grudging acceptance. In no case is there full 100 per cent or even 90 per cent affirmative response to any Jewish practice. If the criterion of acceptance by catholic Israel were applied to determine what religious observances should be retained, many of the long standing practices of Judaism would have to be annulled on the basis of their non-acceptance by these parents. For while this group does not accept many of the Jewish observances, nevertheless, it is still affirmatively Jewish to the extent that it sends its children to Jewish schools and maintains Jewish affiliations.

Attendance at Worship

We shall consider first the matter of synagogue attendance. We find that, among males, the only synagogue attendance worthy of the name is during the High Holy Days and even then the attendance is no more than 72 per cent average on Rosh Hashanah and 74 per cent average on Yom Kippur. A larger number indicate that they sometimes attend synagogue on the High Holy Days, but it is significant that one quarter of the fathers who send their children to Jewish schools absent themselves from synagogue on the most solemn occasion of the year. Consequently, we cannot be surprised to learn that only 15 per cent attend services on other holidays. As for the Sabbath, the total of regular attendance is the extremely low figure of 9 per cent. Only nine out of every hundred parents who send their children to these particular schools attend services on the Sabbath. (See Tables III and IV.)

In the case of the wives, the attendance is far worse. The average attendance for the High Holy Days by the women is about 50 per cent. In other words, only one out of every two women attends synagogue on such a holiday as Yom Kippur. As for the other holidays, women attend services only to the extent of 10 per cent, while on Sabbaths, the attendance of the wives is but 2.6 per cent, approaching the vanishing point. Thus the group can certainly not be called a synagogue-attending group, except on the High Holy Days. There are occasional visits to the synagogue; 44.3 per cent of the fathers and 37.1 per cent of the mothers sometimes attend perhaps at some special occasion, such as a Bar Mitzvah or other celebration, *but* 65 *per cent of the mothers and* 42.7 *per cent of the fathers categorically state that they never attend synagogue* except on the High Holy Days. Eighteen per cent of the fathers and 16 per cent of the mothers never attend even on the High Holy Days.

Rest on Sabbaths and Holidays

As for cessation from work on Sabbaths and holidays, 85 per cent do not work on Rosh Hashanah and almost 90 per cent do not work on Yom Kippur. In other words, 15 per cent do work on Rosh Hashanah and 10 per cent work even on Yom Kippur, out of this most interested group. As for the Sabbath, only 11.8 per cent do not work. Of the several festivals, Passover is the only one which has any recognizable amount of work stoppage, nearly 24.3 per cent. The other festivals rank only slightly

better than the Sabbath in work stoppage. (See Table VIII.)

As for the women, they are equally divided in their Sabbath observance. 1 per cent more cook than do not cook. (See Tables VII and IX.) Only 7.9 per cent do not play the radio and 19 per cent report that they do not play instrumental music. As for the other Sabbath prohibitions such as riding, writing, or shopping, the percentage still observing them varies from 5 per cent among the husbands who do not ride to 25 per cent who do not shop. Among the women, the percentage is a little higher in these observances but, significantly, the item of shopping, which is woman's main province, is lower among the women than among the men. Children are the most observant of all. Thirty-six per cent of them do not write on the Sabbath, but here too, obviously, these customs have fallen into desuetude and, as an active influence on the life of the group, may be adjudged negligible.

Other Observances and Folkways

Among other observances, Kiddush rates very low. (See Table X.) Only 22.8 per cent recite the Kiddush regularly and only 18.4 per cent recite it occasionally. If in respect to synagogue attendance or the prohibition of writing or riding on the Sabbath, there may be hardship entailed, certainly there is no such excuse for non-observance of the Kiddush. Lest we asume that the reason that Kiddush is not recited is because the occasion is lacking, we are told that 69.6 per cent have special Friday evening meals regularly, and 16.1 per cent occasionally. Here, too, the lapse of 30 per cent observance of the most popular Sabbath meal is greatly to be deprecated. Similarly, the recital of grace before and after meals is almost no longer a practice. Grace before meals on holidays enlists 24 per cent of observance, and grace after meals 18 per cent. On other occasions, the observance of grace is even more neglected. Grace before meals on the Sabbath receives only 14 per cent of observance, and after meals only 11 per cent, while on week days, less than 5 per cent recite grace after meals. (See Table XI.)

These are the negative evidences of Jewish observance. Are there any observances where the majority is definitely on the positive side? There are some of these too, though the margin is not very wide. First we shall consider candle lighting on Friday evening, which though not observed in 39 per cent of the homes is nevertheless kept in 61 per cent of the homes and may therefore be counted as one of the Jewish assets. On holiday nights, somewhat more women light candles than on the Sabbath. (See Table X.)

Hanukkah candles, in spite of all that the school does to call attention to the holiday, and in spite of the presence of children in the home, a fact which encourages ceremonial observance, has only 64 per cent of observance by the fathers of the group. Nevertheless, since it is observed by a majority, that too is counted on the positive side.

We have already mentioned the special Friday evening dinner. Other dietary practices, too, are on the positive end. For example, over 87 per cent eat only matzos on Passover, over 70 per cent prepare their meat in accordance with kosher requirements, over 73 per cent eat meat without butter, but only 62 per cent have separate dishes. The Seder on Passover too, ranks high, close to 73 per cent have a Seder on Passover. (See Tables XII-XIII.)

Equally on the positive side is the presence of some Hebrew books in the homes. About 70 per cent of the homes still contain some Hebrew books, 45 per

cent have some Yiddish books, and almost all, as can be seen from Table XIV have some Jewish books in English. An exceptionally large number possess art objects and Palestinian souvenirs. (Table XIV.) Aside from candlesticks, which almost all have, and Hanukkah Menorahs present in 86 per cent of the homes, fully 46 per cent, an exceptionally large number, have pictures of Jewish interest, and 52 per cent have Palestinian souvenirs. Although only 22.8 per cent recite the Kiddush, 54 per cent have Kiddush cups, and even embroidered *hallah* covers are present in more than one quarter of the homes. Obviously, in the field of ceremonial objects and art, these homes are adequately equipped, Jewishly.

Their affiliation with the synagogue and the Zionist Organization, especially with Jewish lodges, is far beyond average. Certainly, an enrollment of 58 per cent in the synagogue, 47 per cent in the Zionist Organization and 63 per cent in societies and lodges bespeaks more than an average interest in Jewish life. Their wives' adherence to Hadassah, sisterhoods, etc., is equally pronounced. (See Table VI.)

General Conclusions and Recommendations

Thus we have a picture of a normal American Jewish group. On the one hand it shows evidences of its interest in Jewishness in many ways. The very fact that all of the subjects are parents of children in Jewish schools is indicative of an interest in Jewish survival. Even the parents of the Sunday school represent mainly a group of girls whom in good Orthodox tradition it is not common to teach in intensive schools. The group belong to synagogues and to the Zionist organization, attend synagogue on the High Holy Days, light candles, preponderantly keep kosher, observe the Passover Seder and the prohibition against leaven, and possess more than an average number of books of Jewish interest, Palestinian and Jewish art objects. On the other hand, it shows up negatively on almost all other rituals, whether they be synagogue attendance, Kiddush, or grace at meals, stoppage from work on Jewish festivals or the Sabbath, the observance of Sabbath and festival prohibitions. Large inroads have also been made into the practices that are still being kept.

It is much easier to discover the disease than to find the remedy. The writers would not be foolhardy enough to assert that they know what should be done. There are, however, some things that might be tried. First of all, it is obvious that the full observance of *all* rituals is now impossible. Most of the Sabbath prohibitions, for example, are not going to receive the consideration which they did. A selection must be made of those practices that are most vital, beautiful and satisfying. A program must then be organized to stimulate their observance. Carefully laid educational plans must be made for school activity with parents. A well-developed program might influence the parents, especially when they have young children at home, to do for their children's sake what they would not do for their own. Candle lighting, Kiddush and Friday evening home observance and even a measure of synagogue attendance might thus be further popularized. Greater care must be given to work with young people who now constitute the most neglected group in Jewish life. It is almost unbelievable that, during the most formative period of their life, when they are growing into maturity, our young people are almost altogether without any religious influences. True, educationally, it is the most difficult period, but that only serves as a reason for doubling our efforts.

The problem of synagogue attendance is certainly one that must be taken up seriously, though again, the writers are at a loss to offer any suggestions. Of course, for those who attend services regularly, there is no problem. They may continue with their services as has been traditionally established. For others, however, a new type of service seems to be imperative. Whether the Reconstructionist services as planned will meet the need and prove attractive remains to be seen. The writers might suggest a few other approaches that may be taken. A greater amount of individual participation in the service might prove attractive to many. In addition to the *aliyot* during the reading of the Torah, where an individual receives personal recognition, opportunities might be offered for reading prayers, and for other types of individual participation in the service. Occasional "sing" services might be organized at special times for a good hearty sing. Sabbath afternoon might be utilized for those persons who cannot attend Sabbath morning. Services in the form of *Oneg Shabbat* might be held with *Shalosh Seudot*. These suggestions, of course, merely scratch the surface of the problem. At any rate the problem is with us, and it will require the serious thinking of all concerned to cope with it.

Synagogue attendance, we saw, is particularly weak among the women. Only about 50 per cent attend on High Holy Days and only 2.6 per cent on the Sabbath. May it not be a reflection of the educational policy of the institution or of the parents? Girls are preponderantly educated in the Sunday school, where naturally no Hebrew is taught. The girls are thus not prepared for participation in a Hebraic service. If our girls and women are not to be altogether lost to the synagogue, it is imperative that we give them the same instruction as boys. Conservative synagogues must abolish the one day a week schools in which Hebrew instruction is impossible, and, even at the risk of losing some pupils, must convert them into week-day schools. Only thus can there be any hope of wider participation by women in the synagogue service.

Table I — Educational Background of Parents

(Total Group — 160)

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*	*Total Average*
Public School	98.1	98.1	97.0	95.6
High School	92.4	60.5	79.6	77.5
College	63.2	30.7	42.4	45.6
Hebrew School	30.2	37.0	37.8	35.1
Yeshivah	1.9	8.6	1.5	4.1
Professional School	10.4	12.3	8.4	10.4
Technical School	—	—	.8	.3
Advanced Hebrew Training	3.8	—	—	1.3

Table II — Yiddish Spoken, Yiddish Newspapers Read, Hebrew Books Read

	Always	*Sometimes*
Husband speaks Yiddish	5.0	82.8
Wife speaks Yiddish	5.0	81.1
Parents speak Yiddish	32.5	53.4
Speak Yiddish to spouse	3.1	57.0
Husband reads Yiddish paper	8.5	30.8
Wife reads Yiddish paper	2.1	13.9
Children read Yiddish paper	—	3.8
Husband reads Hebrew books and magazines	6.8	36.1
Wife reads Hebrew books and magazines	2.6	15.6
Children read Hebrew books and magazines	2.8	39.5

Table III—Husband—Friday Nights

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*	*Total Average*
Goes to synagogue	5.6	12.2	10.6	9.5
Prays at home	5.6	24.4	9.1	13.0
Neither	85.0	53.6	74.3	71.0
Not reported	3.8	9.8	6.0	6.5

Table IV—Synagogue Attendance—Saturday

	Day School		*Heb. School*		*Sun. School*	
	Regularly	*Sometime*	*Regularly*	*Sometime*	*Regularly*	*Sometime*
Husband	7.6	26.4	9.8	60.9	9.1	45.5
Wife	—	28.3	4.9	39.0	3.0	44.0
Children	5.7	26.4	29.2	51.2	16.7	42.4
Parents	35.8	26.4	21.9	36.6	37.8	28.8

Table V—Synagogue Attendance of Husband—Holidays

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*
osh Hashanah	69.8	78.0	68.2
om Kippur	69.8	80.6	72.8
ther holidays	3.8	21.9	19.7

Table VI—Synagogue Attendance of Wife—Holidays

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*
osh Hashanah	43.4	58.6	42.4
om Kippur	47.2	61.0	50.0
ther holidays	3.8	17.0	10.6

Table VII—Sabbath Observance in the Home

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*	*Total Average*
Wife cooks	64.2	31.8	50.0	48.7
Wife does not cook	33.9	60.9	47.0	47.3
Not reported	1.9	7.3	3.0	4.0

Table VIII—Abstinence from Work

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*	*Total Average*
Saturdays	9.5	12.2	13.6	11.8
Passover	17.0	31.7	24.2	24.3
Shavuot	11.3	17.0	16.7	15.0
Rosh Hashanah	85.0	82.9	86.4	84.8
Yom Yippur	86.8	87.8	93.9	89.5
Sukkot	7.6	21.9	16.7	5.4

Table IX—Observance of the Sabbath, Husband

	Day School	*Hebrew School*	*Sunday School*	*Total Average*
Do not ride	1.9	7.3	7.6	5.6
Do not write	5.7	26.3	16.7	16.4
Do not shop	9.5	34.2	31.8	25.2
Do not put on lights	—	14.6	10.6	8.4
Wife				
Do not ride	7.6	12.2	9.1	9.6
Do not write	20.8	36.6	28.8	28.7
Do not shop	13.2	26.8	22.8	21.0
Do not put on lights	3.8	19.6	12.1	11.8
Children				
Do not ride	5.7	9.8	10.6	8.7
Do not write	22.6	46.3	39.4	36.1
Do not shop	17.0	34.2	34.8	28.7
Do not put on lights	3.8	19.5	12.1	11.8

Table X—Lighting Candles Friday Night and Holidays. Also Kiddush and Friday Night Meal

	— Average Total — *Regularly*	*Sometimes*
Wife—Friday night	61.7	21.3
Wife—holiday night	66.3	19.8
Husband—Hanukkah	64.2	18.6
Kiddush—Friday night	22.8	18.4
Special dinner—Friday night	69.6	16.1

Table XI—Blessings and Prayers at Home

	Average Total
Blessings over bread — weekdays	7.5
Prayer after meals	4.6
Prayer before meals—Saturday	14.4
Prayers before meals—holidays	24.2
Prayer after meals—Saturday	11.8
Prayer after meals—holidays	18.7

Table XII—Seder on Passover

Regularly	*Sometimes*	*Never*	*Not Reported*
72.8	17.8	7.6	1.8

Table XIII—Dietary Practices, Etc.

	Average Total
Meat meals without butter	73.3
Separate dishes	62.7
Make meat kosher	70.3
Eat only matzos on Passover	87.5
Have mezuzah on door	84.6

Table XIV—Books, Magazines and Records in Hebrew, Yiddish; or of Jewish Content

	Many			*Some*		
	Day Sch.	*Heb. Sch.*	*Sun. Sch.*	*Day Sch.*	*Heb. Sch.*	*Sun. Sch.*
Hebrew books in home	24.5	14.6	18.2	58.5	35.4	72.7
Yiddish books in home	7.6	12.2	12.1	41.4	48.8	46.9
Books of Jewish content	45.2	26.8	36.4	51.0	73.2	57.6
Hebrew or Yiddish Phonograph records	5.7	7.3	4.5	24.5	19.5	25.8

	Average Total	
Hebrew books in home	19.1	72.2
Yiddish books in home	10.6	45.7
Books of Jewish content	36.1	60.6
Hebrew or Yiddish phonograph records	5.8	23.3

Table XV — Jewish Ceremonial Objects in Home

	Average Total — Yes	No	Not Given
Hanukkah Menorahs	86.5	11.2	2.3
Candlesticks	95.3	2.4	2.3
Silver winecups	54.5	38.8	6.7
Embroidered Hallah covers	26.7	66.2	7.1
Souvenirs from Palestine	52.5	41.6	5.9
Pictures of Jewish interest	46.0	48.6	5.4

Table XVI — Organizational Affiliation

	Average Total — Yes	No	Not Given
Husband:			
Synagogue or Center	58.5	31.8	9.7
Zionist Group	43.8	36.6	19.6
Lodge or society	63.2	20.5	16.3
Wife:			
Synagogue or Sisterhood	32.1	54.3	13.6
Hadassah	30.4	57.8	11.8
Ivriah	3.9	71.0	25.1

Child of Israel

By WM. MORDECAI KRAMER

The beginning of the present is the past,
And that the Jew knows best;
He knows the road and stumbling blocks
The verdant meadow and the rocks
And weariness and rest.
He is not new, the newborn babe
Born in Israel's fold,
Ere he was born
His People lived
Enough to make him old.

Old yet new, new yet old—
Child of Israel, strange blend of days,
Be strong in memory,
Be strong in dreams,
Be worthy of ancient Godly praise!

You are old and the prophets are new;
Your Law they've called false
Your life can prove true.

You are time, above time, and of time,
You are without it, and you are within it;
Child of Israel
Unborn and undying,
Child of Israel
Laughing and crying,
Little know the nations
In their groping
That you symbolize all
For which they are hoping.

Youth in Quest of a Living Judaism

By NORMAN SCHANIN

MILLIONS of our young men and women are in uniform today struggling to win this war. But they are not concerned merely with winning a military victory. They are dreaming of the future. Some are even doing serious thinking and are planning the ways in which they intend to build that part of the world which immediately surrounds them. I write as one of these dreamers.

The Problem of Jewish Self-Expression in America

In the past, the American Jewish Community has failed to provide opportunity for its constituents to express themselves creatively, and to experience the happiness and contentment that should come with belonging to a dynamic and living community. We have never been shown how to find a meaningful relationship between our Judaism and our American way of life. We grow up in an American environment and share the experiences common to all Americans, but, at an early age, we are made aware of something else also, something different in our lives—of our Judaism. What this Judaism means is, however, never made clear to us. It is something we are taught to accept without complaint, even though it may serve as a mark of differentiation calling special attention to us. Many times it is a source of personal difficulties and heartache.

Those who accept the Orthodox interpretation of Judaism are able to find some supernaturalistic meaning and even some happiness in their Judaism. But by their acceptance of Orthodoxy, they virtually divorce themselves from the general American Community, for the tenets of Orthodoxy make no concession to the conditions of life in a community most of whose members are Gentile. Orthodox Jews thus tend to segregate themselves within a religio-cultural ghetto or separatist community. In any case they number a small minority within the ranks of American Jewry. But what of us who desire to retain a positive and active relationship with the non-Jewish world of people and ideas, and, at the same time, to participate wholeheartedly to a maximum extent in our Jewish world? Wherein lies the solution to our difficult?

It does not lie in any attempt to slough off our Jewish identity. Modern society is so organized and stratified that men must belong to a number of different groups and societies. In a true democracy, one needs no justification for maintaining his own particularism (in our case, Judaism), as long as he also does his duty to the common interests of the entire civic community.

But most Americans today still look askance upon such diversity. The majority views with suspicion and dislike, minorities that follow a distinctive pattern of life. And so the chronic disease of hatred of minority groups like the Jews, is able to find a breeding ground around us.

To be true to the highest ideals of American democracy, on the attainment of which our own security rests, we Jews must demonstrate, through our pattern of daily living, both private and public, that there can be "unity in diversity." In addition, we must spread the recognition of the truth that the right of an individual or group to maintain, sponsor, and develop more than one culture or way of life does not result in divided allegiance

or "hyphenated Americanism," that, on the contrary, it makes for enrichment of human life and redounds to the benefit of all.

Every person, group or nation has an individual contribution to make to the benefit of others. This is a thought that Zionist leaders have been proclaiming since the days of Moses Hess. A people's contribution results from the unique interplay between its particular culture and heritage and the cultural influences of its environment. The fight for the recognition of the right to diversity is ours to share with other similar groups—be they black, brown, or white; be they Christian, Mohammedan, or atheist; be they capitalist, communist, or socialist; be they Czech, French, or Indian. Men must be granted the right to be different (but not antagonistic) — if they so desire.

Establishing a Community of Interests

How can the Jewish community in America live its own life and make its distinctive contribution to American civilization? That problem is one for us Jews alone to solve. We will receive no outside aid in finding a solution, nor de we desire such aid.

The first great need is to strip Judaism of its medieval cloak — its supernaturalism as the main basis for the observance of its tenets and precepts. The truly Orthodox will, of course, regard this as undesirable, unnecessary and impossible. But for all others, who openly deny these tenets and disobey these precepts, the maximum observance of a "new" Judaism on a purely voluntary basis must be substituted. This "new" Judaism is the one that will express in modern terms the religious, cultural, and nationalistic elements of the "old" Judaism. It must provide its adherents with the opportunity to find self-expression and happiness as Jews, while they, at the same time, actively participate in the life of American society. The most important task in the reorganization and the revitalization of Judaism is the establishment of a *community of interests* which will enlist the effective participation of American Jews, on an ever-increasing scale. Such a community of interests must be centered primarily in the life of Jews residing in America. In this way it will have the necessary roots from which a communal tree can grow strong and fruitful. Crossbreeding with the fruits of the Palestinian tree of Jewish life will produce a community worthy of our support, our participation, and our pride. Once such a community is established and everyone is thereby enabled to find *his* place, *his* interests, and *his* expression, it will be relatively easy to obtain the maximum participation of Jews. Then there will be little to fear for the safety of the sacred things inherited from the Jewish past, and we will be able to look forward to creative Jewish living in the future.

The establishment of a community of interests to satisfy the needs of everyone will be a slow, painful, but result-producing accomplishment. It would be comparatively easier should there be an active and organized Jewish community with which to work. Unfortunately such community does not exist. Any large synagogue, school, community house, or any meeting room for that matter, can serve as the focal point for such an undertaking. The original conception of a Community Center came very close to providing such a base of operations. But such centers have been unsuccessful because of the lack of adequately trained and motivated leadership. The adoption by those centers of one specific type of religious philosophy, or none at all, led to the exclusion of other groups and persons believing differently. This therefore

defeated the original purpose for which Community Centers were erected.

Basic to our approach is the viewing of Judaism as a totality, as a complete way of life. In such an approach, as has been advocated many times in *The Reconstructionist,* all avenues through which Jewish life passes are important and are deserving of consideration and participation. All those who are prepared to accept as a minimum at least one avenue of Jewish expression are entitled to become members in such a community. With the integration of all the avenues into one system of highways, that particular avenue used by any one individual in expressing his Jewishness, can be widened to include active traffic from other highways leading to the heart and the essence of Judaism. Only persons who are motivated by some such approach to the problem of Jewish living in America, and who have received advanced and perhaps professional Jewish training are qualified to effect that type of American Judaism which is desirable and necessary for the future generations of Jews.

It is only through Jewish education, both youth and adult, that such an approach to Judaism can be cultivated and spread. This education must not merely be for classroom consumption. It is an education that must be part and parcel of our every-day life and experiences.

The Educational Approach

The Jewish education that the average American Jewish child receives is wholly inadequate for positive and creative Jewish living. It does not develop within him the motivating forces which will make him desire to retain a growing and active affiliation with Jewish communal life. The attitude of parents toward their child's Jewish education is usually one of cold indifference or toleration. This results in the extinction of any permanent interest that might be stirred within the child. The boy must have a Bar Mitzvah, or perhaps the girl must become confirmed, or grandma desires the child to learn how to read Hebrew and to know something about the traditional holidays and customs. The conditions implied in these attitudes to Jewish education must not be permitted to continue, if the American Jewish community is to live, not merely exist. Rabbis and principals must unite to enforce the oft talked-of rule that no child be permitted to become Bar Mitzvah or confirmed, unless he or she attains a relatively high degree of Jewish knowledge. Many of our spiritual leaders perceive the need for doing so, but they lack the courage to stand up and demand from their Boards the power to enforce such a rule. And then they cry out against the indifference, apathy, and ignorance of their people.

The teaching of Judaism as a way of life for American Jews is our objective. That means teaching people how to live Judaism, not merely imparting knowledge about Jewish subjects. What is learned must be taken out of the classroom and put into the homes and into the activities through which the pupils express their vital interests.

Within the past several years, a group of us have made a real and sincere effort to find the kind of Judaism we longed for. We wanted personal expression and happiness through positive and creative Jewish living. But we found ourselves baffled by our environment. On the one side, we encountered the gross indifference, ignorance, and laxity of the masses of our people. On the other side, we ran up against exclusiveness, one-sidedness, internal disorder, and the medieval other-worldliness of the so-called *she-erit Yisrael* (the "remnant of Israel"). This side, prompted by its fears and mis-

givings, stubbornly refused to accept the realities of the situations, though it was continually being forced to give ground. Because of our firm belief in the validity and cogency of the ideas set forth, and because of our failure to find "our" Judaism anywhere around us, we sought a solution to our personal problem of how to live as American Jews through an organization to which we gave the name *K'vutza*.

K'vutza—a Youth Project in Jewish Living

K'vutza was an attempt by a group of young people to set up a community of Jewish interests for themselves and for those around them. This community of interests was to enable those who desired it to find "their" place in a pattern of Jewish living that would provide them with happiness and creative expression for their wants and desires. Actually we were trying to create the environment necessary for the flourishing of a creative Judaism. Our plan was to integrate a program of activities proceeding from a group who worked and lived cooperatively within the normal framework of Jewish communal life. We have had no desire to cut ourselves off from our homes and community. We hoped not merely to find personal satisfaction and self-fulfilment, though that was our primary concern, but also to aid in the ultimate reorganization and the revitalization of Judaism within our own community—and from there to the establishment of a workable program for American Jewry. The group serves as a base from which our activities are initiated and radiate.

Herein lies the basic difference between Chaplain Michelson's plan ("For Jewish Cooperative Settlement in America," THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, Vol. X., Nos. 16, 17), and the one discussed here. He suggests the creation of a *separate* community or society apart from the existing Jewish communities, and appealing only to those few who may desire to praticipate in that type of experimental settlement. We desire the reverse, a closer integration with the rest of Jewry. Our plan was originally tried with young people. It has since been successfully applied to other youth, as well as adult groups. The relatively new Reconstructionist Fellowship is organized along very similar lines, since its underlying and motivating philosophy is so closely akin to the one discussed here.

K'vutza was born during the winter of 1942 as the cherished hope of Sgt. Sheldon Feinberg and this writer (with kind assistance and encouragement from Henry R. Goldberg, Rabbi Jack J. Cohen, and Rabbi Harry Halpern). For months we labored working on outlines of organization and programs. When finally our plans were ready for translation from paper to reality, we gathered together a group of sixteen Jewish boys and girls then between the ages of 14 and 17. Many were members of the neighborhood Hebrew High School. They were in that period of their development when they would either find some positive growing connection with Jewish life, or would suffer the fate of most young people and find some other interest as a substitute for their Judaism. They were an alert and eager group who hungered for something to which to belong. They needed means for personal expression, the kind that would provide them with satisfaction. Is there any normal group of young people who do not share these wants and desires? It is only because Jewish life in America is a failure, that its youth has become indifferent, sullen, and cynical about Judaism.

I earnestly and sincerely doubt whe-

r there is any other group existing ay within this country which is com- tted to the goal of practicing Judaism as way of life. All activities of the group, lectively as well as individually, are lertaken with that view in mind. With h criteria for living we proceeded with tremendous task of molding a pro- m of activities which would create the ironment necessary for living such a laism. Practically all the young peo- , as well as their elders with whom we e into contact, had a distorted view Judaism. They came, for the most t, from passive or even antagonistic nes. Their Jewish education was in- quate to enable them to understand laism and all its manifestations. Their ws were narrow and their conception Judaism fragmentary. They had a e-meal knowledge of historical Juda- . It remained one of the purposes of program to unite and synthesize their ws into one that saw Judaism as a lity.

ficulties Encountered

rom the very beginning, two difficul- immediately presented themselves to One was the lack of time. The other the shocking lack of adequate ma- al which we could use in our pro- mming. Our group consisted of aver- American youth, who engaged in usual activities of young people, but , in addition, attended a Jewish ol. Consequently their time was ited. As a result we met every other k for about three hours. This was dually supplemented by voluntary at- dance at late Friday evening services, urday morning services, *Oneg Shab-* and periodic excursions out-of-doors physical relaxation and recreation, as as visits to places of Jewish interest. was our hope, of course, to inspire members with the desire to carry over into their private and daily lives the Judaism to which we were introducing them.

Perhaps the greater difficulty was the finding of adequate program materials with which to work. We found it necessary to reorganize, revise, and synthesize what was already in existence, and to create new material. Our own creations were the more enjoyable and useful since they were expressive of our own needs. The development of program material was a long and tedious process. But the fruits of our labor truly repaid us a thousand times over.

Let us now take a good look at *K'vutza* from the inside. One of the major inadequacies of Jewish organizations is their inabilty to integrate into their programs, the personalities and abilities of their members. With this in mind we set up a different type of organization, one which could compare organizationally with the Palestinian cooperative colony, the *K'vutza*. That is one of the reasons why we eventually became known as *K'vutza*. Most organizations are dominated by leaders and officers; we have neither. Although Sgt. Feinberg and I were older than the rest and were the organizers of the group, we nevertheless took part in the programs and were considered as fellow members. In place of officers we have chairmen of various activities which we consider to be vital parts of Judaism. The following is a partial list of such chairmanships: music and dance; literature; dramatics; *Ivrit* (Hebrew); arts and crafts; current events and current problems; Palestine; Zionism as a philosophy and movement; religion.

K'vutza at Work

At the beginning of each year, the members have an opportunity to chose their own field of interest—a different

one each year. The chairman supervises the group's work in that particular field. Each meeting is presided over by a different member, the chairmanship rotating in alphabetic order. The nature of the meeting determines which of the other specialized chairman will prepare for special participation in that meeting. An important part of our organizational structure is the way we meet. We always sit in a circle and meet informally. Sitting in a circle is indicative of our principle of equality and sense of community.

There is a *vaad,* or executive council, whose purpose is to propose and distribute jobs, and to supervise the preparation and presentation of the programs. It also examines the activities of the group as well as the work of individual members to determine whether standards are being maintained. All decisions of that council are reviewed, criticized, and must be agreed upon by a majority vote of the membership before they are accepted or rejected. True Jewish life is democratic, and therefore our organization must also be uncompromisingly democratic.

The programs themselves are divided into two parts: the fixed and the variable. The variable elements differ each week. The fixed elements are as follows: The meeting opens with Bible reading or any other equally inspirational reading. In the spring we observe the *Havdalah* ceremony, since we start at the conclusion of the Sabbath. This is followed by the business which is usually not allowed to take up more than thirty minutes. After the business is completed we have the fixed cultural half of our programs. This consists of a book-review, followed by a discussion of current events. The variable part usually consists of a report made after some research by one of the specialized chairmen, in which he gives past history, facts, and figures on his subject; or there is the actual doing of some activity or project presented by the chairman. If it is music, we sing as well as listen; if it is dance, we dance and have demonstrations; if it is dramatics, we act and watch performances; if it is Zionism or contemporary problems we discuss the subject or listen to speakers or see movies; if it is arts and crafts we build and create. All the meetings end only after much singing of Palestinian folk songs and dancing of Palestinian dances. Few members go home dissatisfied with the meetings. The spirit generated by the comradeship and spontaneity of the group makes up for any deficiencies which may exist in the program.

A unique feature of our *K'vutza* is its financial structure. We have no treasury in the usual sense of the word. Instead we have monthly *missim* (taxes), which are put into a *Keren Tarbut* (cultural fund). The purpose of this fund is to help the members purchase books of Jewish interest; to defray the cost of outside activities (such as attendance at concerts, art-programs, hikes, etc.); to sponsor attempts at Jewish creativity, and to help defray the cost of equipment for our own work. We have given annual awards to winners of contests held in the local Hebrew schools for creative work on Jewish themes. We have built a puppet theatre, and a model *moshav,* and have produced a unique program of Jewish art all with the aid of this *Keren Tarbut.* Is there any better foundation for the establishment of an over-all community chest to cover communal expenses, activities, and projects, than the one described here?

During the three years following the birth of our *K'vutza,* we have done much in the way of actual accomplishment. One of our first creations was the building of a large puppet theatre. The first presentation was an original playlet on the historical story serving as the basis for

ne holiday of *Shavuot*. This was presented n celebration of the holiday before both n adult and children's audience. It ormed a novel part of an *Oneg Shabbat*.

We have conducted our own late Fri- ay night services with an arrangement ifferent from the usual type of religious ervices conducted within synagogues. here was no rabbi or cantor. We did ave a musical leader who directed the ommunal singing. We sat in our cus- omary circular arrangement and recited nison prayer-readings in addition to the nusical part of the service. The central ection consisted of an interesting and timulating reading prepared and pre- ented by a different member each week.

Our several *Onege Shabbat* were wide- y acclaimed by those of the community who participated in them. They were oted for their originality, their friend- iness, and their ability to generate a ense of joy characterisitc of the Sabbath.

Each member has bought books of ewish interest each year with the aid f the *Keren Tarbut*. He has attended ewish concerts, exhibitions and meetings.

K'vutza's Services to the Community

We have become known and looked up o in the community as a result of our articipation, with various communal or- anizations, in public meetings. Such or- anizations as Hadassah, the Parent Teachers' Association of the local He- rew school, the district Zionist chapter ave repeatedly invited our participation t their meetings. Voluntarily we join with the community in holiday services nd religious celebrations, in school ac- ivities, and in communal philanthropic rives. In general we try to assist the ex- sting organized Jewish community in any way necessary and possible.

The purchasing of trees in Palestine nd contributing to the Jewish National Fund have become habitual. To date we have bought several gardens of trees in Eretz Yisrael.

We are proud of the fact that almost all of our members have been and are attending Jewish institutions of higher learning, ranging from Hebrew High Schools to Teacher's Colleges and Seminary Schools. This is inevitable if one sincerely adopts the program and responsbilities we have set up.

In celebration of our first birthday we presented a public program of Jewish art. We endeavored by a series of presentations to prove that the people of Israel lives, and not merely exists. The programs began with two *Onege Shabbat*. The first was devoted to the Jewish folksong and the second to the Jewish folkdance. Original talks illustrated by songs and dances presented by the members, were the feature of the two afternoon gatherings. Our anniversary celebrations culminated in a third and final program through which we tried to utilize all the Jewish arts. The program was staged, directed, and produced by all the members themselves. That program was presented one evening on a professional basis. It was called "The People of Israel Lives," since that was the theme we were trying to portray. A brief outline of that program may be in order. It may help others to present some much-needed programs of Jewish art.

A stirring pageant based on biblical themes and figures (Jeremiah and Ezekiel before the tomb of Rachel) was the first major section of the program. The cantata by Dr. and Mrs. Ira Eisenstein, "What Is Torah?" was the feature of the second section. The latter presentation stirred the audience so tremendously that we were subsequently swamped with requests to repeat the performance of the cantata again and again on many other occasions. The program concluded with two original sketches of modern

Palestine by this writer. The presentation was witnessed by several hundred people and made a deep impression on both the audience and the participating members of *K'vutza.*

This proved that there were definite possibilities for doing creative Jewish work on a large scale. What is even more important is the fact that our members were beginning to find some self-expression and happiness within Judaism. We used the large proceeds of the evening to set up scholarships for members of the Hebrew School graduating classes who, each year, would produce the best original creative work in any phase of Jewish art. Within the past few months a beautiful model of a *moshav, a type of* colony in Palestine today, was designed and built by the members of *K'vutza.* Those who saw the finished product exhibited at a local Zionist meeting, praised its workmanship and gazed with appreciation at this product of the work of Jewish youth infused with a spirit of Jewish living.

It should be mentioned that an advisory committee of several parents of the members, presided over by the principal of the local Hebrew School, was organized some time ago. The formation of such a committee came about as a result of the induction of both Sheldon Feinberg and this writer into the armed forces. It also came about as a result of our desire to establish a positive relationship between members of the group and their individual homes.

Conclusion

One thing is obvious. If our group life is to continue to flourish, it must have constant relations with other groups living a dynamic and creative Judaism as part of a vital Jewish Community. A blooming branch on a dying tree will not bloom for long. Similarly, no group can exist for any length of time amidst surroudings of chaos and decay, and still retain its productivity. We have shown how to achieve Jewish group life by utilizing groups already in existence. Those who are still able must lead the way in reorganizing and revitalizing our communal groups with a little of this "new" Judaism. With the formation of a community or over-all group council which will integrate and supervise the activities of the groups, we have the basis for the organization of a thriving Jewish community representing all groups, individuals, and activities. It is only in such a communal structure that there can be established a community of interest which will enlist the effective participation of our present and future generations of American Jews. When that is a reality, some of our dreams for the future will have been fulfilled. Then and only then, will American Jewry be able to say with pride, "The people of Israel lives"—and not merely exists.

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 9)

of thing will almost inevitably recur unless and until American Jewry pays attention to the need for a comprehensive, permanent and democratic Jewish community organization for American Jewry. We will continue to harp on this need until the Jewish public wakes to the importance of satisfying it.

NOTICE

With this issue, THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST suspends publication for the Summer. Publication will be resumed in September.

Editors

he Perils of Victory*

By MORRIS ADLER

THE announcement of Germany's collapse rekindles e hope, not of victory for that we have ver doubted, but of a quicker conclun to the war. Victory is now in sight. rhaps nowhere in the world has this ddening and momentous announceent been received with such a moderan of joy and celebration as by us, the en in the Armed Forces.

We have become realists as a result our experiences. Too often in the past s anticipation been stimulated in us to high pitch, only to end in frustration. e have learned caution and wish to ard ourselves against the possibility of rther disappointment. Therefore we main reserved. Moreover, we men overas are weary. Lifetimes of emotional periences have been compressed into e 20, or 30 or 40 months we have ved in distant places. Exuberance and tacy are not too easily educed from r spent nervous systems. We know with e insight that comes from direct con-t with combat and horror, that before e guns are entirely stilled many more our comrades will be added to the gic list of casualties. We know with m vividness that a doom hangs over merous buddies of ours who have caped unscathed till now. One does t easily surrender to unrestrained joy en one possesses such foreknowledge d is moved by such foreboding. Lastly who are in the ranks are, I believe, per and sensible enough to recognize at the burning issue is not: "When shall achieve total victory?"; but rather, What shall we do with the victory that is ours?", or "After victory—what?"

We know what the price of defeat would have been. Defeat would have meant dictatorship, suppression of conscience and right, rule by force, constant surveillance by the Gestapo, concentration camps, mass massacres; in a word, a life of unceasing dangers and intolerable burdens. What is, however, all too frequently forgotten is that victory likewise is not without its perils. There have been triumphs in history, Pyrrhic victories, that fathered ominous aftermaths for the conquerors. What hazards and perils of victory should we guard against?

The Peril of Self-Righteousness

The way is now opened to the weaker among us to withdraw into a state of utter smugness and self-satisfaction. Victory is an invitation to complacency. Our cause has been vindicated. Our right has been upheld. Our superiority has been established. Domination by the feeling of self-righteousness would blind us to our own imperfections, to the domestic inequities in our own society. A Jewish ethical teacher, the Baal Shem, once remarked to his disciples: "If a man has beheld evil, he may know that it was shown to him in order that he learn his own guilt and repent, for what is shown to him is also within him." The evil we have fought is in a true sense, the grotesquely lengthened shadow of the evil which informs our whole civilization in the West. A relapse into smugness would disqualify us from dealing vigorously with our own problems, from resolving our own conflicts, from correcting our own delinquencies. We must mend the crack in our own Liberty Bell. Otherwise, we become the Quislings of the peace effort.

*An address delivered by the author as aplain to servicemen overseas after the anncement of V-E Day.

Within our domestic life there are serious and dangerous tensions between races. The need for a more truly collective economy will have to assert itself over entrenched privilege, and reaction. An interpretaion of patriotism and nationalism will have to be fostered and spread that will make love of country supplementary rather than antagonistic to the unity of mankind.

Smugness will breed inertia and inertia will spell a return to isolationism. Then shall we be perpetuating the status quo out of which World War II sprang. We must not forget that the true antithesis of peace is not war, but injustice. If we are sincere in our professed desire to eliminate war, we must be prepared to destroy the conditions which cause war. We must, therefore, avoid falling into that pitfall of victory which begets smugness and self-righteousness.

The Peril of Relaxation

Another danger results from the fact that we are weary, exhausted. The only vital desire that beats high in most of us, is the wish to return home and enjoy once again the comforts and felicities of rest and serenity. Chesterton said that a dictatorship may be defined as a tired democracy. Peace, however, can never come out of lassitude and ease. Peace is not a bestowal. It is a positive achievement. We must, in the Biblical phrase, "pursue" peace. For it will not come haphazardly nor is it guaranteed simply by our military victory.

We shall likewise be hampered by the fact that the defeat of Hitlerism not only destroys a threat to our national safety but also deprives us of a mighty force for national unity. Relaxation would be fatal. As Herbert Agar points out in his "Time for Greatness," "The minute the forces of a civilization begin to relax, the barbarian again enters the pages of history." We must mobilie our resources for peace with the same intensity we organized our production for war. Our ingenuity, formerly harnessed to destruction, must now be dedicated to reconstruction and healing and education. Plato long ago recognized that "The true test of a state is whether its minister of education is more important than its minister of war."

Nor must we permit any contraction in peace of our global perspectives. We conducted the war on the basis of a grand, world-wide strategy. Peace will not be won by a campaign of lesser magnitude. We must not go back to smaller maps. The economic structure and the political organization of world society will have to be analyzed and organized with both skill and consecration. Only thus can that social equilibrium be established whose fruit is peace.

The Peril from the Desire for Spoils and Vengeance

Victory exposes us finally to a danger arising from desire for rewards. We have toiled and sacrificed; we have crimsoned remote places with the blood of our young. It is to be expected that there will be a clamor for tangible compensation for our costly effort. It has become axiomatic that to the victor belong the spoils. Because that axiom has been followed in the past we have been denied lasting peace. The pages of history are portraits of battle-scarred eras.

The only "spoils" that could adequately compensate us for our sacrifices is the elimination of war. It is nobler to affirm that to the victor belongs the responsibility for establishing peace. Not desire for gain, nor vindictiveness should motivate us — but justice. Justice is not a soft virtue. It is stern and grim. In the name of justice we hang people or commit

em to the electric chair or imprison em for long periods. Mercy is a supement to justice. It can never be its bstitute. It is significant that, in the ophet Micah's summation of the good e, "to do justly" precedes "and to love ercy." Not alone Zion but our civilizan can be redeemed only by judgment d righteousness.

Raoul de Sales in his provocative "The Making of Tomorrow," said, "That a certain familiar world had died forever in 1914, and that no new world had been born in 1919 was not apparent until Hitler came to demonstrate the reality of the vacuum in which we have lived for the last twenty years." World War II has removed the remains of the old world. We must fill the vacuum with a new and better world.

Book Notes

A BIOGRAPHY OF HERZL'S SUCCESSOR

AVID WOLFFSOHN, By Emil Bernard Cohen. Zionist Organization of America. 274 Pages.

THIS is a fascinating biography of Herzl's chief adjutant and immediate successor and also a vivid account of early Zionist history and struggle.

Born in a small Lithuanian town near the Prussian border, David Wolffsohn inherited from his father, who was a devout Jew, a deep love for Judaism and for his people. This love achieved aim and realization after Wolffsohn read Herzl's *The Jewish State,* which proved the crucial event in his life. So remarkable and instantaneous was the impression made by this book that he at once proceeded to Vienna to meet the author. The impact of Herzl's personality was even more striking and immediate. The very first meeting with Herzl made Wolffsohn his instrument, indispensable to him and to Zionism.

While Herzl gave inspiration and power to the movement, it was Wolffsohn who laid the preparatory ground work, and who dealt with the opposition. That opposition was both many-sided and determined, in view of the revolutionary thesis propounded in the Jewish State. Ahad Ha'am, the leading Jewish thinker of the day, spurned the project on the ground that prophets alone were capable of winning Palestine, not politicians and diplomats. A more serious obstacle was the habit of *shtadlanut* to which the Jewish community was addicted. The wealthy Jews who served as the self-appointed representatives of their brethren were timid and resentful. Insecurity made them fear and fight the program of Zionism. So terrified was the Munich Jewish community at the scheduled first Zionist Congress that the conclave was transferred to Basle, Switzerland.

The very idea of a Zionist Congress aroused violent controversy, and protests poured in on Herzl from everywhere—from Dr. Herman Adler, the chief rabbi of London, from Dr. Guedeman, the chief rabbi of Vienna and from the rabbis who belonged to the German Rabbinical Association, known to Zionists as the "Protest Rabbis." With few exceptions, all Jewish leaders condemned Herzl as one who breached Jewish discipline, who went

ahead with a program, with a committee and with decisions—without consulting anybody but himself. Wolffsohn played a large and significant role in meeting this opposition which raged furiously and which seriously threatened the movement. The first Zionist Congress, at Basle on August 29th, 1897 was as much a tribute to him as to Herzl, who acknowledged his enormous debt and gratitude in many an affectionate letter.

The only source of friction between the two men concerned the administration of the Jewish Colonial Trust. This institution, which played so large a role in Jewish development in Palestine, was bitterly fought by all the Jewish bankers whom Herzl and Wolffsohn tried in vain to interest. Some advanced as the reason for their opposition the word *Jewish* in the title. Mainly they feared the entire project. The only banker of repute who remained with Wolffsohn was Kahn of the Hague. He, however, distrusted Herzl's unorthodox approach to the functions of a bank. Wolffsohn's efforts to satisfy his own and Kahn's business judgment incensed Herzl, but only for a while. And when Herzl died suddenly, spent in the cause, Wolffsohn found himself not only the guardian of his three children but the heir to his leadership.

The new president was instantly confronted with the same violent opposition which his predecessor had had to face, an opposition not always sincere, but frequently motivated by personal rivalry and animus. The seventh Zionist Congress convened in July, 1905, was the first at which he presided. It was the scene of a bitter battle over the British Uganda offer—Zionist ranks were split wide open. The head of the Jewish Territorialist movement, Israel Zangwill, demanded the acceptance of Uganda. When it was turned down, he seceded with this unworthy declaration: "Herzl told me that the Seventh Congress will be the last Congress, and I hope that it will be so." Zangwill added further difficulties to the movement and to Wolffsohn by later instituting a suit in London against the Jewish Colonial Trust to prevent it from 'altering its Memorandum of Association to restrict its objects to Palestine, Syria and the adjoining countries."

A constant opponent was Dr. Chaim Weizmann, head of the important Standing Committee. At the seventh Congress he accused the new president of "Passive resistance to the practical work in Palestine." In 1908, at a meeting of the Grand Actions Committee in Berlin, he so outraged Wolffsohn that the latter was forced to make this impatient and angry retort, "When we engaged in politics, Dr. Weizmann demanded from us practical work; now when we are doing practcial work; Dr. Weizmann wants politics. We were always told that we must undertake something in Palestine and now everything we are undertaking is wrong." Other notables joined Weizmann. Foremost among these was Ussishkin, who not only complained that the Jewish National Fund was neglected, but organized a very powerful opposition at Odessa which accused the president of sponsoring, not Herzlian political Zionism, but, of all things, "botanical" Zionism. And Sokolow, while editor of *Die Welt,* was "anything but loyal." Yet Wolffsohn carried on—establishing his authority and growing in prestige.

The 9th Congress, in 1909 at Hamburg, was the last at which he presided. Despite violent opposition, he could have easily won re-election, had not poor health compelled him to withdraw, to the secret satisfaction of his foes. His physical condition deteriorated steadily and on September 15th, 1914 he died at Dentz, mourned with reverence and affection by the entire Jewish world.

—Theodore N. Lewis